NEXUS AFRICA

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RESEARCH YIELDS UNDERUSED SOURCE OF FOOD IN AFRICA: GRAINS

According to the United Nations, 42 countries in Sub-Saharan are in the food-deficit category. However, according to the United States National Research Council, there is a vast resource of indigenous food plants that people are not taking advantage of.

By Warren E. Leary

From *the New York Times*

WASHINGTON — Sub-Saharan Africa often evokes images of famine, drought, starvation and malnutrition. Yet, researchers say, this area is the home of more than 2,000 grains, vegetables, roots, fruits and other foods that potentially could feed the continent and even other parts of the world.

Africa, which seems to face a perpetual food crisis, is full of overlooked and underdeveloped food plants that are not being fully exploited in the fight against hunger, according to a recent report by the National Research Council, an arm of the National Academy of Sciences.

In the first of a planned series of reports titled "Lost Crops of Africa," an expert panel examining grains said Africa has more indigenous varieties of cereals than any other continent, including its own species of rice, millet, sorghum and several dozen more. Forthcoming studies are expected to focus on the promise of native fruits, vegetables, legumes and other foods.

"This is a good heritage that has fed people for generation after generation stretching back to the origins of mankind," the report said. "But, strangely, it has largely been bypassed in modern times."

Even though local grains nourish millions of Africans, they have lost out in popularity to such imports as wheat, rice and maize, the report said, and only a few receive concerted research, development and marketing support to improve their quality and expand their use.

These grains and other native foods are considered "lost" not because they are unknown, the report said, but because they are given little or no attention by the mainstream of interna-

tional agricultural science and are often even ignored by Africans outside regions where they are native.

During Africa's colonial era, European authorities, missionaries and researchers judged unfamiliar native grains inferior to foreign cereals such as wheat and corn, experts said. The imported grains, made convenient and attractive by modern milling, processing and packaging, also became the favorites of Africans. Over time, they said, the old grains languished and took on the stigma of being second-rate food for the poor or subsistence rations for hard times.

"Africa is called `the hungry continent,' yet it is a cornucopia of food plants people are not taking advantage of," said Dr. Noel D. Vietmeyer, the staff director for the report.

Studying and improving Africa's native grains should become an international priority, the report said. Not only would this open up a new front in battling Africa's food shortages, it said, but it could provide the world with new sources of food amid concerns about global warming and climate change, and the Earth's rapidly growing population.

African grains tend to be hardy, less dependent upon large amounts of water or irrigation, and more heat and drought tolerant than other major cereals, experts says.

"For the future, such resilient crops will be vital for extending cereal production onto the ever-more-marginal lands that will have to be pressed into service to feed the several billion new arrivals," the report said.

The report spotlighted a half dozen African grains that are likely to become crucial in feeding the more than 40 nations of that continent and others elsewhere. While a couple of the cereals have already registered some success through development, it said, the potential of others is virtually untapped.

Among the grains highlighted in the report were these:

Pearl millet. Domesticated from a wild grass of the southern Sahara 4,000 years ago, pearl millet tolerates heat and drought better than other major cereals. The tall, top-heavy plants are relatively low yielding compared to some other grains, but are disease-resistant and grow in sandy soils under arid conditions. The world's sixth largest cereal crop, pearl millet's use in the United States as an animal feed has been growing and researchers in Georgia, Nebraska and Kansas have developed short varieties that can be harvested by machines designed to bring in wheat and other crops.

Fonio. This West African grain is probably the world's fastest maturing cereal, but is grown primarily on small farms for home consumption. The plant, which does well in poor, sandy soils, is unusually high in several amino acids and nutrients and has a reputation as one of the world's best tasting grains. Despite its potential, fonio has drawn little attention from agricultural researchers.

African rice. Although many people think of rice as an exclusively Asian crop, farmers have grown this native variety in West Africa for at least 1,500 years. The grain comes in several types, some of which mature very quickly for multiple plantings, and some researchers believe its genetic characteristics might be transferred to other rice to benefit production worldwide. The grain is much like common rice in flavor, but most varieties have a red husk.

Sorghum. Although this grain has spread from Africa to become a staple of more than 500 million people in 30 nations, it is relatively undeveloped. Sorghum thrives on marginal sites where other grains fail and has become a principal animal feed in the United States. Researchers say they have produced new varieties that make high-quality white flour.

Tef. This staple cereal of Ethiopia is ground into flour and used to make the flat, fermented bread called injera that sustains millions of people. The grain is rich in protein and iron, and well-balanced in amino acids, but research on it has been scant.

The potential of tef outside of Africa can already be seen in the United States, said Wayne Carlson of Caldwell, Idaho. Mr. Carlson became aware of the grain while working as a biologist in Ethiopia 20 years ago and returned to start tef growing in a harsh, dry valley on the Idaho-Oregon border. Now, he has hundreds of acres under cultivation with several varieties of tef, which he sells to a growing market of natural-food markets and Ethiopian restaurants nationwide. The success of his operation, now called The Tef Company, began by marketing the grain to the tens of thousands of Ethiopian immigrants in this country, he said.

"We are trying to develop tef into a real commodity that people pay real money for," Carlson said. "I see it as a valuable crop even for areas outside of Africa, and the best way to perpetuate it outside its home territory is to establish new markets so it can pay its own way."

Dr. John M. Yohe of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln said pearl millet could become the next African grain to find widespread success in this country. A program sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development that teams researchers at American universities with counterparts in Africa

has led to improved varieties of sorghum and millet, he said.

As underground water supplies used for irrigation in the Midwest are depleted, Yohe said, millions of acres of sandy soils in western Kansas and Nebraska may remain productive only by using crops, such as pearl millet, that can grow on rainfall alone.

"Pearl millet is naturally a high-value crop, higher in protein and oil content even than corn, but a lot of research hasn't been done on it," he said. "Its initial potential here is for chicken feed, but as we learn more about it, it could end up finding a role in human food products in this country." ❑

FACT SHEET: THE UNITED STATES AND THE 1996 WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

THE SUMMIT:
The World Food Summit will be held November 13 to 17 in Rome, Italy, under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. According to the FAO, the Summit objective is to renew the commitment of world leaders to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and the achievement of lasting food security for all.

THE ISSUE:
At the World Food Conference in 1974, the world community committed itself to eradicating hunger and malnutrition. Two decades later, there are still an estimated 800 million people in developing countries who face chronic malnutrition. At present, as many as 88 nations fall into the category of low-income food-deficit countries: 42 in Sub-Saharan Africa, 19 in Asia and the Pacific, 9 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 6 in the Near East/North Africa, and 12 in Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States. At the same time, commitments of external assistance, bilateral and multilateral, to developing-country agriculture have declined, dropping from $10,000 million in 1982 to $7,200 million in 1992 in constant 1985 U.S. dollars.

U.S. PREPARATIONS/PARTICIPATION:
The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) has lead responsibility for U.S. government preparations for the Summit in cooperation with the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as for liaison with the non-governmental and private sectors. An Office of the National Secretary for the World Food Summit has been established within FAS. As part of its Summit preparations, the United States has produced a country paper addressing its policies and actions related to global food security.

U.S. COUNTRY PAPER:
The U.S. country paper for the World Food Summit, entitled "The U.S. Contribution to World Food Security," was finalized and released in July 1996. It outlines U.S. policy with respect to food security at home and abroad. The country paper identifies the following four primary objectives to guide U.S. participation at the World Food Summit:

— adoption of appropriate national policies by all countries as the foundation of food security at all levels;
— assertion of the U.S. role in assisting other countries to overcome hunger and malnutrition through U.S. leadership in agricultural, fisheries, and trade policies; development assistance; agricultural research; long-term environmental forecasting; and as necessary, food aid;
— promotion of the critical role of sustainable development in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors in achieving food security; and
— recognition of the essential role of women, population stabilization, education and good health in achieving food security.

SOURCES: USDA AND FAO

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVANCES IN EAST AFRICA

Modern telecommunications is expensive. In East Africa, public and private entreprises are working together to upgrade and expand communications systems.

By Ronald Rosenberg

From *The New York Times*

As a Harvard Business School student, Monique Maddy figured she wanted a film career and spent the summer of 1992 in Hollywood working on the 20th Century Fox lot.

But it wasn't until the following summer on a trip to Tanzania — one of Africa's poorest countries with an average income of $250 a year — that she realized there were bigger opportunities as an entrepreneur than her original goals of working in the film industry.

Maddy, 33, is creating a pay telephone system in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's capital of 2.4 million people, that makes its debut next month. The system uses American cellular and Canadian communications switching technology.

"I realized that working in Hollywood was not something I wanted to do for the rest of my life," said the Liberian-born Maddy, who, since graduating from Harvard in 1993, now spends more than half her time shuttling between Cambridge, Mass. and Tanzania.

"I got some good experience understanding how to enter new markets from the movie industry ... but in the end I felt the film industry was one dimensional and I wanted to do something more challenging," said Maddy, who, as part of her stint with 20th Century Fox, tracked the overseas film grosses of such movies as "Edward Scissorhands."

With Harvard classmate, Come A. Lague, and the guidance and financial support of some Harvard faculty members, Boston area investors and large corporate sponsors, Maddy and Lague have raised just over $5 million and have formed African Communications Group. Their lofty goal is to become a $100 million company in the the next five to six years, based on providing telephone, computer data voice mail, cellular, paging and facsimile communications in Africa.

A few months ago, they formally launched their company's first business: a coinless pay telephone service in Dar es Salaam.

This year they expect to install between 200 and 400 telephones, mostly in Tanzania's central business district, at the university, airport and government offices. To use the phone, callers will buy one of five debit calling cards — priced between 87 cents (500 Tanzanian shillings) and $34.72 (20,000 Tanzanian shillings) — at restaurants, retail shops, supermarkets and pharmacies.

"I think we'll get about 80 percent of our card buyers from business customers who are frustrated using the government phone system," said Maddy, noting that in Dar es Salaam there are only 55,000 telephones. The majority of calls are made by businesses, who account for 70 percent of the telecommunications revenue. About 20 percent of the revenue was from government organizations and 10 percent from residential subscribers.

African Communications Group is the latest example of entrepreneurs with sophisticated technology rushing into parts of Africa to get a foothold in one of the world's last remaining virgin communications markets. Some African countries are looking to privatize their phone systems and expand services. Others need to modernize their aging communications infrastructure and are offering attractive financial incentives to lure foreign investment.

"Africa is a wonderful opportunity for small and medium-size companies with innovative ideas, like a cellular pay telephone system," said Dirk Stryker, professor of international economic relations at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. "And the public desperately wants telephones, even though many cannot afford them."

Tanzania has a $225 million loan from the World Bank to upgrade its infrastructure, including the telephone system and the Tanzania Telecommunications Commission, which has granted licenses to private companies — like African Communications Group — to provide specialized services.

Maddy, who spent five years with the United Nations' Development Program in Angola and other parts of Africa prior to attending Harvard, hopes to beat the traditional American and European telecommunications giants in countries like Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana by offering a variety of communications services to businesses first.

She acknowledges that the large

corporate communications providers have entered some areas and then they left because of political instability, high corruption and vandalism. A number of them, she feels, are simply wary of investing big bucks in Africa when there are more opportunities with less risk in China and Latin America.

"Tanzania, like a lot of other African countries, has rampant government corruption, although it has gotten a lot better in the past five years since the end of socialist rule," said Stryker.

Maddy said her company has not paid bribes to government officials. "Maybe we missed the signals (of corruption), but we are very honest," she added.

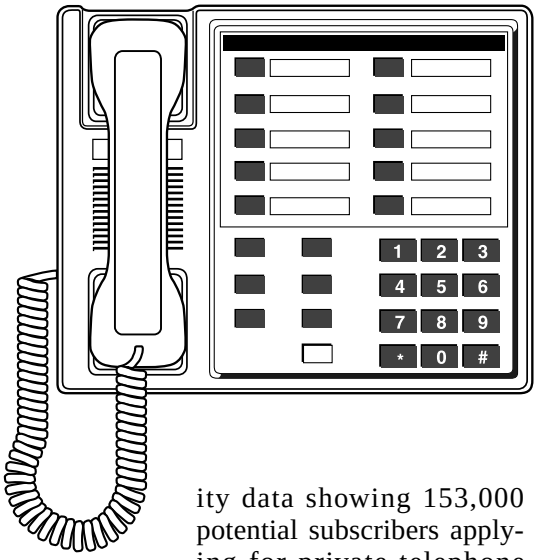
Richard Churchill, general partner at M/C Partners, a Boston venture capital firm that invests in media and communications companies, said he — not the firm — invested in African Communications Group knowing the risks, but he said he feels the Tanzanian government is reasonably stable.

"Ultimately I felt that their debit card pay phone service is not a luxury service, but one that is a necessary ingredient for telecommunications infrastructure and for economic growth," said Churchill, one of five board members.

"Right now, we think we can get market share in parts of Africa much more quickly than the big communications players," said Maddy. African Communications Group is working with Computer Corp. of Tanzania Ltd. Their joint venture, called ACG Telesystems Ltd., carries nearly $11.3 million of political risk insurance from the Washington-based Overseas Private Investment Corp. in the event that antigovernment riots should destroy their phone system.

Putting pay phones in a poor country where the overwhelming majority of people don't have access to a telephone, is an daunting task. In Dar es Salaam, business people and some government workers will have to leave their offices to make calls on a pay phone because office phones are being used by someone else or they are unable to get through due to technical difficulties. With cellular technology, calls go directly to the Tanzanian-owned telephone switching system, bypassing miles of cable.

"The government has such a backlog of telephone installations, they just can't keep up with the demand for land-based phones," said Lague, citing Tanzanian telecommunications authority data showing 153,000 potential subscribers applying for private telephone service, some of whom wait anywhere from seven to 10 years for service hook-ups.



Another growing group of telephone users are small businesses which often send staffers on motorbikes or bicycles to arrange deliveries from suppliers. Now businesses can call someone with a phone near their supplier, explained Maddy.

A bank of 10 pay telephones is being installed on the docks at the request of the Tanzanian Harbor Authority to relay information about incoming and outgoing freight. African Communications Group will also install new phones at the University of Dar es Salaam for students and faculty and at hospitals, hotels and railway stations. African Communications Group's transmission tower will be located at the university.

Maddy and Lague's pay phone system has some shortcomings that puts a spotlight on what happens when advanced technology arrives in a largely unregulated arena. For starters, the telephones cannot receive incoming calls. Also the phone cards work only with African Communications Group phones. A rival, Jupiter Communications Ltd., of London, has installed about 15 pay phones that only work with its proprietary card.

African Communications Group and Jupiter are two of 20 organizations that have licenses for pay-phone services, although they currently are the only ones operating in Tanzania.

Finally, the overall rarity of telephones in Tanzania and the shortcomings of the government-owned telephone system — the success rate of a call can average between 25 percent and 45 percent — has led some residents to start their own business. They charge neighbors, friends and strangers as much as 2000 percent above their costs to use their private telephone.

Once African Communications Group's phones are up and running, the company will offer voice mail and other services, said Maddy. She has already set her sights on Uganda and Ghana, which are looking to privatize their telephone systems and are looking to license additional carriers. ❑

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MAKING IT; OUT OF AFRICA

Nigerian immigrants make good selling African culture, from books to clothing.

By Sonya Kimble-Ellis

From *Black Enterprise*

Six years ago, Tunde and Temi Dada left their native land of Nigeria to make a new home in the United States. After attending several festivals where they saw Afrocentric products being sold, Tunde had a entrepreneurial brainstorm. At each of these fairs, various venders sold separate items. Wouldn't it be more lucrative, Tunde thought, if all these products were brought together and peddled under one roof.

A few months later, he and his wife took out a $10,000 cash advance on two credit cards and opened their first store. They stocked their 2,000- sq.- ft space with African books, jewelry, clothing, hair products and greeeting cards.

Today, the husband and wife team are the owners of Tunde Dada, which grossed about $1.4 million in sales last year. The 15-employee company specialize in selling cultural and educational products to the general public and small retail stores, with a client base that reaches as far as the Virgin Islands and London.

Initially, the Dadas made several key, business-savvy moves to help secure their store's success. To promote the venture, the couple participated in local fairs and set up booths at major corporations and school during Black History month. They also placed advertisements on buses and purchased commercial spots on cable television and radio stations.

Before they knew it, their clientele was larger than the space could accommodate. So, in 1994, the Dadas bid $300,000 to buy a vacant bank located across the street from their store. After securing a loan and haggling for months with the building's owners, they were finally able to move into the three-floor 15,000- sq-ft bank property. The expanded business now includes masks, statues and games.

The main floor of the store houses a children's section complete with toys. The third floor is a gallery, where patron can buy the works of prominent local African American artists. The store also serves as a meeting place for book clubs and signing by popular black writers.

The Dadas are looking at creating a chain of black-owned gift shops. They have already spent $60,000 in construction and $100,000 to fully stock a second store.

ANIMALS MAY CROSS BORDERS UNDER PLAN FOR THREE-NATION PARK

South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique share a vast wild life reserve. Soon animals will be able to roam freely across national borders.

By Judith Matloff

From *The Christian Science Monitor*

During the apartheid era, South Africa staged incursions across its frontiers to wage war and destabilize its neighbors. Now it wants to tear down border fences — in the name of peace and prosperity — to create the world's largest conservation area.

If all goes as planned, South Africa's giant Kruger National Park will join up with Zimbabwe's Gona-re-Zhou National Park and wildlands in Mozambique to create a huge transfrontier reserve.

Promoters say the park would restore animals' natural east-west migration routes, now blocked by political borders. It would also replenish game in depleted areas and provide much-needed tourism revenue for Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

"The benefits would be myriad, to animals and people," Robbie Robinson, South Africa's National Parks Board chief executive, told the Monitor.

Mr. Robinson said the new park would be two or three times bigger than Kruger, whose 7,500 square miles is almost as large as Israel.

Kruger, one of Africa's biggest game parks, receives tens of thousands of visitors a year. It is widely recognized as one of the world's best managed and does not suffer from the corruption seen elsewhere on the continent. Robinson says sharing South Africa's expertise with neighboring countries where poaching is rife could help save endangered species such as the rhinoceros.

A study for a transfrontier park was completed with support of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 1991. The decision was that the time was not ripe for the park as long as South Africa was ruled by a white-minority government.

But South Africa's relations with its neighbors have improved following its first multiracial elections in 1994. Discussions among the three countries began in earnest last year, and joint commissions were set up to study the park idea.

The World Bank, WWF, and other international agencies have shown interest in assisting the project, which would cost an estimated $4 to $8 million.

Robinson sees few problems in linking Kruger with Zimbabwe and says the plan could come to fruition within two to five years once agreement is reached on joint patrols and other matters.

Mozambique is another story. Experts warn that there would be much to be resolved once the fences come down, including how to control disease, the flow of illegal aliens, and poaching. They point out that Mozambique is one of the world's poorest countries and is suffering the ravages of a devastating civil war. Land mines, hunger, and corruption are widespread. Environmental awareness isn't.

The World Bank, which along with several United Nations agencies is helping to manage $5 million of Western government aid to promote biodiversity in Mozambique, predicts it will be several years until the transfrontier park becomes a reality.

"In principle, it is a very exciting idea. The potential for jobs and revenue would be tremendous, as well as the environmental gains," says a spokesman for the Johannesburg office of the World Bank. "However, capacity in managing parks must be built. There are no functioning parks in Mozambique and that has to start first."

In recent talks, Mozambican officials expressed concern that South Africa would try to take over the management of what would be a large portion of their territory. They also worry about the displacement of people in communities within the designated areas.

The latter concern is shared by the Endangered Wildlife Trust, a nonprofit environmental group in Johannesburg that has been taking part in discussions.

According to the EWT's Mozambique expert, Don Beswick, it would take at least a decade to build the proper game stocks and infrastructure and properly train a staff. Mozambican authorities would need to discontinue handing out hunting concessions near the border as well.

WWF officials say much can be learned from other cross-border parks. They cite the adjoining Serengeti and Masai Mara in Tanzania and Kenya and a recent project to link up new conservation areas in the Central African Republic, Congo, and Cameroon.

But both cases were relatively easy because the populations living in the designated areas were nomadic and had coexisted with the park animals over centuries, says Henri Nsanjama, WWF vice president for Africa, based in Washington.

"Mozambique is going to be a

tough one; (the) people aren't used to living with animals. It is different from the other cases where the local population respected animals," he says. But he adds, "Humans can always learn with education."

In the meantime, Robinson is looking at smaller cross-border projects. He says South Africa and Botswana are setting up joint management of a conservation area in the Kalahari Desert.

Discussions are also under way to start a new park in the corner of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana within five years and to establish a protected area under joint management with Namibia on either side of the Orange River. ❑

CONGRESSMEN WILL BE PART OF U.S.-TO-AFRICA TRADE MISSION

WASHINGTON — The Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) will break new ground next January when it takes several congressmen on its first-ever trade mission to Francophone Africa.

A business association representing 90 U.S. companies interested in investment opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa, CCA was established in 1992 by a group of former U.S. government officials who saw that trade was increasingly becoming the engine for economic change in the region.

David Miller, a former official with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and now CCA's executive director, told a U.S. Information Agency reporter , "We're going to take a trade and outreach mission to Cote d'Ivoire and the Congo, with a brief stopover in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, January 8-16, and we hope to take representatives of 35 U.S. corporations with us."

Miller added that the trip will be "our first trade trip to Francophone Africa, and we are deliberately targeting Cote d'Ivoire and the Congo because both have expressed a willingness to expand commercial ties with the American business community."

He said the trade mission would include several congressmen, among them Representative Bill Archer, chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, which overseas U.S. trade policy.

According to Miller, "the whole point of this mission is to get the Americans over there on the ground to see what business prospects are available. We're bringing a number of companies out that definitely want to do business in Francophone Africa.

"I think American products are competitive," he added. "They are priced reasonably and include the best technology in services and products that the world has to offer today. And that is everything from fossil fuel recovery to transportation and telephones."

Miller stressed that "there's enough business there for all of us" in Francophone Africa. "All we're asking is that a level playing field for American companies be made available so that Africans can decide themselves and get good value from investment partnerships."

Miller also pointed to the growing cooperation between the U.S. government and the private sector in working to expand trade and business ties in Africa, saying, "One of the main reasons we're going to Cote d'Ivoire is because U.S. Ambassador Lannon Walker is over there."

Walker, a former ambassador to Senegal and Nigeria, "has been a friend of American business ever since we've [CCA] been in existence, Miller said. "He is someone whom American companies really appreciate."

He added that Walker's "aggressive promotion of American commercial interests has gone a long way in helping American companies make inroads in West Africa, and he more than richly deserves our thanks for his efforts on behalf of Americans and Africans."

Miller noted that "American business is definitely helped by a strong political message coming out of Washington. If we're perceived as having American political support in our endeavors, it's easier for us to do business abroad.

"The good thing about the Clinton administration has been that a huge emphasis has been placed on Africa, an emphasis that, frankly, was just not there before," he added.

At the same time, the trade expert said, "there is a new wind that is blowing in the United States" based on the need to include all of the world in effective trade relationships — and "regardless of whether we get a Republican or Democrat in the Oval Office [White House], I think Africa is on the radar to stay."

American English is Fast Becoming a World Language

By Kim Campbell

From *The Christian Science Monitor*

BOSTON — Like many Russians, Ilya Bezouglyi learned English the way his teachers preferred: British style.

But after being laughed at in Canada for using the word "chaps," and after a year of graduate study in the United States, Mr. Bezouglyi says that he and his English are "pretty much Americanized."

The "Americanization" of English is happening around the world today, from Africa to Britain itself. American English is seeping into the nooks and crannies of English everywhere thanks to education, business, Hollywood, and the Internet.

Although British English — which many countries consider to be the "real thing" — is widely taught around the world, what those learners use in their private lives is more influenced by the US.

As a result, "American English is spreading faster than British English," says Braj Kachru, a linguist in India and a founder and co-editor of the journal "World Englishes."

In television broadcasts alone, the United States controlled 75 percent of the world's programming as recently as 1993, beaming "Sesame Street" to Lagos, Nigeria, for example.

Americans also outnumber Britons: People are more likely to encounter one of the 260 million Yanks than one of the 55 million Brits. "It's more practical to speak and understand American English these days," says Bezouglyi, who adds there are more Americans than Britons in Russia today.

The spread of American English began in the decades after World War II. Experts say the simultaneous rise of the US as a military and technological superpower and the receding of the British empire gave many in the world both the desire and option to choose American English.

English in general has spread during that time as well. More than 1 billion people are thought to speak it as a native, second, or foreign language. Among the roughly 350 million native English speakers, the American version is spoken by about 70 percent.

"There's no question that Britain made English an international language in the 19th century with its empire," says Bill Bryson, an American author of several books on the history of English. "But it's Americans that have been the driving force behind the globalization of English in the 20th century" because of their commercial and cultural clout, he says.

Examples of the influence of American English include:

— Young people in Europe, Asia, and Russia using it in casual conversation — including the notorious US export, "you guys" — even when many of them have been taught British English.

"As far as I can see, it's exactly equivalent to wearing Nike baseball caps, or Air Jordan shoes," says Mr. Bryson, who listened to teenagers speak with American accents in the Netherlands recently. "It's a kind of linguistic badge."

— In Brazil, people often ask for courses in "American," rather than English, according to Bernabe Feria, head of curriculum and development for Berlitz International in Princeton, N.J.

— In Nigeria, years of trade with the US — and contact that blossomed in the 1960s with the Peace Corps — have greatly increased the use of American English. It is now spoken along with British English, a leftover of British colonial rule.

— In Cairo, as recently as 1984, some university students received lower grades if they used American spellings instead of British. Since then, there has been an increase in the number of teachers in Egypt trained by Americans. "You can well imagine that nobody gets a red line through their paper for spelling 'center' with an 'er' anymore," says Richard Boyum, the head of English-language teaching activities at the United States Information Agency (USIA).

— In Thailand, the standard in both schools and the English-language press is British English. But university teachers may speak English with an American accent because they have studied in the US.

— The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), long the promoter of proper British English, now includes Americans in its broadcasts. Its English-language teaching programs feature Americans in broadcasts that go to countries where American English is favored, such as South Korea.

Britain has not been immune to the spread of American English, either.

More words that were exclusively American are now found in the speech and writing in both countries, says Norman Moss, compiler of an American-British/British-American dictionary called "What's the Difference?" "Once 'guy' and 'campus' were almost

unknown in Britain," he says. Today they are widely used.

Britons are also increasingly saying "movie" instead of "film." Computer-related words are more frequently spelled the American way: program, without the British addition of "me" on the end, for example. And the American phrase "the bottom line" is encroaching on its British equivalent "at the end of the day."

"We tend to take them [Americanisms] over if they are useful and reject them if they are not," offers Geraldine Kershaw, a senior English-language teaching consultant to the British Council, a government-sponsored agency that operates British-English teaching centers worldwide.

Linguists note that the mixing of British and American English in Europe has given rise to a "mid-Atlantic" English, a more neutral language that is less identifiable with either country.

In some European countries, both kinds of English are now accepted and taught. Some learners prefer American English because they believe it has fewer regional accents and dialects than British English does, experts say, and therefore is easier to understand and to use.

Still, the USIA — which advises countries on English teaching but does not teach it directly — and its British counterpart, the British Council, argue that the languages are not in competition.

"I don't think there is a fierce contest going on between the two kinds of English," says Ms. Kershaw of the British Council. She notes that there are very few differences between the two.

Neither of the agencies "has a budget that could anywhere satisfy the demands that foreign institutions are placing on upgrading English-language expertise," notes the USIA's Mr. Boyum. "What we do in this field is actually mostly cooperate rather than compete."

But the question of who is teaching the world to speak English is no small matter. The hunger for the language has made English teaching a big business.

"English has become an economic commodity," says Dr. Kachru, who runs the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Illinois in Champaign.

Some estimates place the revenues of the worldwide industry at about $10 billion annually. That includes teaching, textbooks, and materials, and money spent by foreign students who choose to attend schools in English-speaking countries as a result of learning the language.

The dollar amount will likely get much bigger if predictions by the British Council that more than 1 billion people will be learning English by 2000 prove true. Markets that are expected to contribute to the rise include Russia and China. China alone is estimated already to have between 200 million and 400 million people who speak some form of English.

Currently, much of the English taught in Europe, India, and parts of Asia and Africa is British or British-influenced. American English is favored in Latin America, Japan, and South Korea.

But linguists note that often those learning the language just want English — they don't care what kind. English is often studied by people whose primary purpose is not to speak to Americans or Britons, says Dr. Feria of Berlitz. They need to speak with other nonnative speakers, using English as a common language, experts say.

Many cultures also increasingly communicate in their own forms of English — Indian English, for example. And some countries may reject either American or British English if speaking it is considered undesirable for political reasons.

Nevertheless, English teaching generates more than $1.1 billion annually for Britain. The British Council pulls in about $237 million of that from its global, self-supporting English teaching and related activities. Last year, it launched its English 2000 program. One of its aims is to attract more foreign students to Britain through promotion of British English and culture worldwide.

Australia is also in the game, adding an estimated $415 million annually to its economy from teaching English. It, too, has become more aggressive recently, establishing English-teaching centers in Asia as a way to attract foreign students to Australian universities.

Although the US government discontinued its involvement in direct English teaching in the 1970s, the US still attracts 450,000 students and scholars to American schools each year. They, in turn, become a powerful dissemination vehicle (in addition to bringing more than $7 billion annually to the American economy).

"Each one of them obviously learns American English, and in fact some of them go back and become teachers of it abroad," says John Loiello, associate director for cultural and education affairs at the USIA.

In addition, it is thought that those who learn one kind of English or another, especially when they learn it while immersed in the culture of a country, are more likely to buy the goods of that country in the future.

Muscovite Bezouglyi is a case in point. He reads Newsweek magazine and frequents a newly opened American bookstore in Russia. He says he chooses to read American publications because he better understands "what they're writing about and their English."

As English continues to spread, some experts say, a form of it could become the common language of the world. But multiligualism is also on the rise, suggesting that English may not be the only language to prevail.

David Crystal, a linguist from Wales and author of the Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, says that the way English is changing now, if it does become the global language, "it's going to be American-English-dominated, I have no doubt." ❑

Maryland Plantation is Restored As a National Heritage

Two American families, divided by history 150 years ago, are today united in a project to restore and preserve their common heritage.

By Michael Janofsky

From *The New York Times*

HOLLYWOOD, Maryland — When John Hanson Briscoe joined her on the Sotterley Plantation Board of Directors in 1994, Agnes Callum reached the end of a journey lasting almost 150 years.

"I felt so happy," Mrs. Callum said recently, recalling their first board meeting together. "I was thinking 'We've finally come full circle. We're equals at last.' That made me feel good."

Mr. Briscoe's great-grandfather once owned the plantation; Mrs. Callum's great-grandfather was the slave of a neighbor. Now, as colleagues, they share the common goal of helping raise money to restore the once-majestic plantation, built in 1717, and its slave quarters so future generations can more fully appreciate what servitude meant.

"This really represents so much of American history," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, "all that was wrong with the period and what's right now."

The National Trust recently added Sotterley to the list of America's Most Endangered Historic Places. The plantation overlooks the Patuxent River here in this small town in southern Maryland, where there were slave owners and Southern sympathizers as the Civil War approached.

Through their work together on the board, Mrs. Callum, 71, an amateur genealogist from Baltimore, and Mr. Briscoe, 62, a former Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates and now chief judge of the St. Mary's County Circuit Court, have fashioned a warm friendship. They hug when they meet and chat amiably about most anything.

Mr. Moe said he knew of no other collaborations between descendants of masters and slaves.

But one subject that Mrs. Callum and Judge Briscoe seldom discuss is their very point of historical connection, despite the overwhelming sadness Mrs. Callum said she felt walking into Sotterley's slave quarters.

While racial tensions might roil others around the country, they both seem satisfied, even comfortable, viewing their families' ties through a lens of pragmatism.

"To this day," Judge Briscoe said in a separate interview, "she has never made me feel ashamed or that I had to say I was sorry that this happened. With the whole subject of slavery, she was never looking for an apology. She never for one moment asked for one, and I did not offer one. It's history, and part of it was unfortunate."

"Apology?" Mrs. Callum said, surprised that anyone might think such a gesture was reasonable for her to expect or polite for Judge Briscoe to extend. "It never crossed my mind, and thank God for that. It wasn't him; it was his great-grandfather. I'd be insulted if he apologized. He didn't do anything to me."

As Mrs. Callum, a retired postal employee, walked the quiet grounds of the plantation, she reflected on the historical improbability of their bond. "Very rarely," she said, "do you find a member of a slave family who you can connect with a member of the white family who owned the slaves, not by hearsay, but documents."

Mrs. Callum first grew curious about her ancestry decades ago through stories her father told her, stories of her great-grandfather, Hillery Kane, which his father had passed on to him. But Mrs. Callum's father recalled that Hillery Kane had been owned by a Dr. Briscoe. That was incorrect, it turned out, but the information eventually sent her diving into history books, historical accounts and surprisingly detailed documents kept by the county, one of which is "A Record of Slaves in St. Mary's County."

Through years of meticulous research of state and county records, she discovered that when Judge Briscoe's great-grandfather, Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe, owned Sotterley in the mid-1800's, Mr. Kane had been bought at auction in December 1848 for $600 by a neighbor of the Briscoes, Chapman Billingsley, and that three months later, Dr. Briscoe had purchased Mr. Kane's wife at the time, Mariah, and their four children for a total of $1,050.

Mrs. Callum later learned that Mr. Billingsley owned the adjacent farm and often hired out Mr. Kane to the Briscoes and other slave-owning families to work as a farmhand and plasterer. She also found that Mr. Kane had spent a lot of time at Sotterley with his wife and children.

Mariah died in 1853 and two years later Mr. Kane married another Sotter-

ley slave, AIice Elsa Bond. They had 13 children, including a son, Henry, born in 1862, who was Mrs. Callum's grandfather.

Mrs. Callum managed to trace her ancestry to 1793 and also found records of thousands of blacks who lived in St. Mary's County, including many who fought for the Union in the Civil War.

"After I found that my people were slaves here," Mrs. Callum said, "someone told me that a Briscoe was Speaker of the House in Annapolis. I thought, maybe he knows something."

Mrs. Callum said she had tried to reach him by telephone and got no further than an aide, who later told her that Mr. Briscoe had no knowledge of the identity of slaves who had been owned or worked for his great-grandfather. "He wrote me a nice letter, wishing me luck," she said of Mr. Briscoe. "But I never met him or talked to him until two years ago."

Judge Briscoe is an 11th generation member of an English family that was among the first settlers of Maryland, in 1634. The family claimed Sotterley Plantation as home after the former owner died in 1825 and Judge Briscoe's great-grandfather, Walter, married the owner's step-daughter, Emeline Dallum. Walter and Emeline reared 12 children on the estate.

According to Mrs. Callum's research, the Briscoes owned as many as 52 slaves; the Billingsleys, 33.

As in the Callum family, stories were passed on through generations of Briscoes. But Judge Briscoe said that his elders seldom talked about the slavery in their past. "Talk of Sotterley was very spasmodic," he said. "My father would speak about it, but it wasn't discussed that much."

The Briscoe family sold the plantation in 1904 to the Rev. Henry Satterlee, the first Bishop of the National Cathedral in Washington. It remained in his family until a daughter, Mabel Satterlee Ingalls, inherited the estate and established it as a nonprofit — but unendowed — foundation in 1961. She served as president of the board until 1992 and died a year later.

Before joining the board, Mrs. Callum had been a frequent visitor to Sotterley, often bringing busloads of relatives to show them how their ancestors lived. Other board members had become familiar with her visits and research efforts, but the invitation to join them came "clear out of the blue sky," she said.

When Judge Briscoe joined the sotterley board, selected for his role of prominence in the community and his family's ties to the plantation, he said he had not known of the depth of Mrs. Callum's research.

She took care of that quickly. After they shook hands at their first meeting together, Mrs. Callum gave Judge Briscoe a copy of her work, "a total inventory of slaves owned by different families, lists by names, ages, sex, purchase price and where it took place," as he recalled.

"I was so surprised," he said. "I never knew about all this, that records were available. I thanked her for it; this was a very significant part of the history of my family."

The plantation's manor house has suffered physically over the years. The roof bows; wallpaper is peeling. Some of the rooms have a musty quality to them, and the small wooden house where slaves were quartered, which sits just down the hill but in clear view of the manor house, remains only a spartan shell

By calling attention to the needs of Sotterley, the National Trust is attempting to help raise $2 million for repairs. A decade ago, the plantation attracted 20,000 visitors a year, almost twice the current number.

Mrs. Callum has been touched deeply by what she has discovered — both in the record books and on the grounds, where board members say as many as 10 slave homes once stood.

"The feeling of hopelessness they must have felt came right through," Mrs. Callum said. "They would go up the hill to find beautiful linens, crystal glass, then they would come back down here to thias. But it also shows character and fortitude. They survived the system. I'm here." ❑

CERAMIC ART EXHIBIT AT SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Ceramic art works by African artist Magdalene Odundo are on display at the Smithsonian Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.

Fifteen large clay vessels (containers) sculpted by the well-known Kenyan artist are on exhibit from September 18, 1996 to January 2, 1997 .As part of the exhibit, Odundo will make a rare appearance in Washington October 26, when she will lecture on her oeuvre and give a demonstration of her pottery-building techniques.

A Museum of African Art spokesman noted that Odundo "brings a contemporary sensibility to her interpretation of traditional African container forms. She hand-builds ceramic vessels, not as utilitarian objects but as explorations of form, color, and texture."

Odundo's vessels, the spokesman added, exert "a powerful presence, with their rounded, sumptuous bodies" glazed to a high sheen.

The gift of creating ceramic pieces has largely been lost in the industrial world, where plastic and metal replaced clay containers long ago. Therefore, art such as Odundo's, based on the clay craftsmanship still alive in the African countryside, is especially prized by lovers of ceramic art.

The curator of the Odundo exhibit, University of California art director Marla Berns, wrote that Odundo's work so inspired Zimbabwean artist Locadia Ndandarika that she "got up after hearing Odundo lecture on her work and started dancing, moving her arms in long, sweeping gestures and clapping in the Shona tradition of expressing joy."

In conjunction with the exhibit, a theater in the museum shows two video films of interviews with Odundo as well as displays of her hand-building techniques.

Is Affirmative Action Fair? :A Question With Many Answers

Affirmative action programs were established by Presidential Executive Orders in 1965 and 1967 to provide equal opportunities for Americans without regard to race, religion, national origin or gender. Today, these programs are being questioned and put to test in the American democratic process.

By John Balzar

From *The Los Angeles Times*

The strength of democracy is also its weakness. Yes, Americans get to vote on important matters, or at least some of the important matters, and for that they stand ready to fight. But also, they find themselves asked to vote on questions that make them uncomfortable, where they must take sides against their own mixed feelings, knowing their votes will impose a consensus when none, in fact, exists. And against that, there is no way or will to fight at all.

As Oscar Wilde, ever the cynic, once put it: "Democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people."

In November, Californians will choose, as it were, between fairness of opportunity and equality of opportunity in the workings of state and local government. Or is it the other way around, equality versus fairness?

This is not idle wordplay with the citizen ballot initiative Proposition 209, the latest hot spillover from the caldron of race and gender politics in California.

On Nov. 5, Proposition 209 will demand a decision on a subject where basic laws of the land are contradictory and their history veiled, where judicial direction is indecisive and policy implementation is uneven, where an entire generation has lived with something and still cannot agree what it is.

Proposition 209 is about affirmative action. It's about affirmative action preferences for blacks and Latinos, Native Americans and women, but only those working for the government—or seeking government contracts or competing for admission to public colleges. Affirmative action for that slice of the population would be outlawed by amendment to the state Constitution with passage of the initiative.

But Proposition 209 also is about the nature of a fair society, America's grand stereotype of itself and a 35-year quest to right hundreds of years of social wrongs. It's about getting a break in a society where demand exceeds supply when it comes to opportunity.

So in nine weeks, Californians will have to choose their ground. Yes or no.

Both sides in this campaign voice allegiance to the founding belief that equality is an essential aim of society.

But the definition of fairness and proper tactics for achieving it have bedeviled the country from the start, and ever more now.

Words are power. And, as French writer Antoine De Saint Exupery remarked, "Words are the source of misunderstandings."

The term affirmative action goes back to at least the 1940s in the struggle over civil rights. According to George E. Curry, editor of Emerge magazine and author of a new book, "The Affirmative Action Debate," the term first gained legal standing in 1961 in an executive order signed by President John F. Kennedy establishing the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson appealed for "an understanding heart by all Americans" to right the wrongs of racial inequity.

That year, the government enacted the landmark Civil Rights Act. And Johnson set out to prepare a divided nation for "the next and more profound stage in the battle for civil rights."

"Freedom is not enough," Johnson said. "You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: Now you are free to go where you want, do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please.

"You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, 'You are free to compete with all the others,' and still justly believe that you have been completely fair."

Johnson specifically referred to black Americans, whom he called "another nation: deprived of freedom, crippled by hatred, the doors of opportunity closed to hope."

The next year he signed Executive Order 11246, requiring federal contractors to take affirmative action to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, religion or national origin. In 1967, the category of gender was added.

In 1969, under President Richard Nixon, the law was expanded to require "goals and timetables."

For many, the objective seemed

apparent. But America's affirmative action laws and regulations actually have been shrouded all along in ground fog generated in the power chambers of government.

At the very same time the nation embarked on affirmative action, Congress approved the 1964 Civil Rights Act, still the law of the land, and it specifically outlaws discrimination in employment based on "race, color, religion, sex or national origin."

Further, the late Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, a sponsor of the law, repeatedly said the critics were wrong to worry. "It is claimed that the bill would require racial quotas for all hiring, when in fact it provides that race shall not be a basis for making personnel decisions," Humphrey said.

But, of course, something of that sort was in the minds of those who wrote the regulations. Portions of government contracts were set aside for disadvantaged groups. Colleges and universities began to award extra points toward admission based on race. Government agencies that failed to diversify their work forces were ordered by courts to do so.

All the while, everyone denied that any of this was a "quota," that overloaded buzzword.

The result could be described by analogy to a card game, which, like life, requires the essential components of skill, luck and opportunity. Those who had been excluded from the table because of their race or gender now had legal rights to participate. And the dealer was expected to deal them an extra card in their hands once in a while as affirmative action to make up for keeping them away. After all, they were new to the game, and it was only fair to help.

The extra card here and there was supposed to even out the chances of winning, and, viewed from a detached distance, had undeniable logic. But the new rules, by avoiding quotas, created a vagueness that could be aggravating. Some old-timers at the table felt they were losing too much, while some newcomers believed they were gaining their share too slowly.

Through the years, those who felt aggrieved by affirmative action fought back on grounds of "reverse discrimination" and were successful in limiting, but surely not eliminating, race and gender as deciding factors in government hiring, contracts and educational admissions.

In 1972 and again in 1973, a white man named Allan Bakke was denied admission to the University of California medical school at Davis. He sued, complaining that 16 of 100 openings in each class were unfairly set aside for ethnic minorities. The U.S. Supreme Court split 5-4 in ordering Bakke admitted. But at the same time the court held that race could be taken into account for admissions. The court ruling offered six different opinions filling 156 pages.

Confused? Do not blame yourself.

In the 1990s, the challenges to affirmative action gained strength from the confluence of two powerful social currents—the new economic anxiety of "downsizing" and the growing influence of conservatives and their ideology of individualism.

In his book "Ending Affirmative Action," writer Terry Eastland concludes that the sum of all such programs "has guaranteed the salience of race and ethnicity in the life of the nation, thus making it harder to overcome the very tendency the civil rights movement once condemned: that of regarding and judging people in terms of their racial and ethnic groups."

Courts, meanwhile, whittled away further at affirmative action in employment, limiting it more and more to remedial cases where past instances of discrimination could be proved.

Last year, Rep. Charles T. Canady (R-Fla.) proposed outlawing all race and gender preferences in federal government. The policies of affirmative action, he said, "expressly reject the principle of equal opportunity."

Canady said President Johnson was just wrong. "The true meaning of American equality," Canady argued, does not require that Americans be equal in fact, but only in opportunity. No more help from the card dealer.

"Preferential treatment and genuine equal opportunity are fundamentally incompatible," he said.

Many Americans understand the contradictions Canady raises. And pollsters could surely raise a majority of Americans to agree with him about preferences. Just as they could establish a counter-majority in agreement with Lyndon Johnson and affirmative action.

This is the nature of America's uncertainty.

Unlike, say, abortion, where American opinion is firm and can be measured one way and the other, opportunity at work and in education raises a complicated tangle of emotions, from the most personal of realities—a paycheck—to the social abstractions of rightness and justice.

The result, as pollsters frequently say, is that one's response to affirmative action depends on the wording of the question, one's mood at the moment and, surely, whatever happened at work or in school that week. And even this sometimes does not explain all the contradictory sentiments.

A poll of Californians taken in July by the Los Angeles Times found that 48% of those who said they supported affirmative action also said they supported Proposition 209 to eliminate it in government.

In March 1995, a more extensive statewide poll by The Times found that only 9% of Californians felt they ever received a break as a result of affirmative action. But 22% were sure they had been victims of reverse discrimination because someone else got ahead as a result of affirmative action. This included a surprising 29% of African Americans who felt they too had been victims of reverse discrimination.

Polls like this can be made to portray America as selfish. Or conversely as kindhearted. Or maybe even delusional. Who among us is not a little of all three?

In the questioning, 66% of respondents said they would favor an initiative to prohibit government from

granting preferences based on race or gender. Word the same question differently and 70% of these same respondents said they favored "special programs designed to bring more women and minorities into workplaces and educational institutions."

A total of 74% of the respondents said California was "not close" to eliminating discrimination, and 57% voiced support for civil rights laws, saying they are right as now written or should be strengthened. On the other hand, 43% of the respondents, and 52% of whites, said that even though discrimination persisted in California, "affirmative action had gone on too long."

In a new and meditative book on America's social conflicts, "Democracy and disagreement," Princeton professor Amy Gutmann and Harvard's Dennis Thompson suggest that citizens owe each other a more deliberative approach to governance, where moral disagreements like affirmative action are not winner-take-all matters.

It is possible, the authors suggest, to be moral in one's thinking without also being righteous, although this "imposes on citizens a greater obligation to account for their choice of policy than they usually assume."

In an analysis of affirmative action, the two professors conclude that discrimination, including past discrimination, is a "moral wrong" and that this fact should be the starting point for debate.

"Justifying a policy of preferential hiring or a policy of nondiscrimination requires giving reasons to those citizens most disadvantaged by the policy—reasons they can respect even if they deliberatively disagree with them," the scholars suggest.

"In the process . . . all citizens can come to understand better the moral meaning and policy implications of fair opportunity."

Can the Proposition 209 campaign achieve such a state of grace?

The recent history of California ballot propositions suggests this is unlikely. These runaway campaigns have become about winning, not understanding. And sometimes winning at the expense of understanding.

"The only sin which we never forgive in each other," said Ralph Waldo Emerson, "is difference of opinion." ❑

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (1956 - 1996)

Year	Presidential Candidates	Party	Electoral Votes	Popular Votes
1996	William Clinton *	Democratic	??	??
Nov 5	Robert Dole	Republican	??	??
1992	**William Clinton**	*Democratic*	370	43,727,625
	George Bush *	Republican	168	38,165,180
1988	**George Bush**	*Republican*	426	48,886,097
	Michael Dukakis	Democratic	111	41,809,074
1984	**Ronald Reagan** *	*Republican*	525	54,455,075
	Walter Mondale	Democratic	13	37,577,185
1980	**Ronald Reagan**	*Republican*	489	43,899,248
	Jimmy Carter *	Democratic	49	36,481,435
1976	**Jimmy Carter**	*Democratic*	297	40,830,763
	Gerald Ford *	Republican	240	39,147,973
1972	**Richard Nixon** *	*Republican*	520	47,169,911
	George McGovern	Democratic	17	29,170,383
1968	**Richard Nixon**	*Republican*	301	31,785,480
	Hubert Humphrey	Democratic	191	31,275,166
1964	**Lyndon Johnson** *	*Democratic*	486	43,129,484
	Barry Goldwater	Republican	52	27,178,188
1960	**John Kennedy**	*Democratic*	303	34,226,731
	Richard Nixon	Republican	219	34,108,157
1956	**Dwight Eisenhower** *	*Republican*	457	35,590,472
	Adlai Stevenson	Democratic	73	26,022,752

* Denotes sitting President

How Do Americans Determine Their Votes?

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USIA Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Despite pre-election maneuvering by political parties and their highly paid consultants, American presidential contests have "largely turned on the performance of the party in the White House," says noted political historian Allan Lichtman.

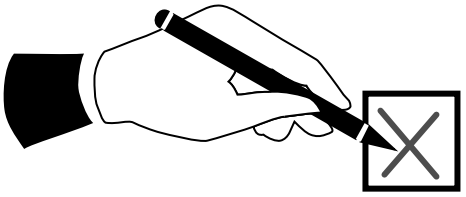
Lichtman made his comments during a recent discussion about the upcoming presidential election with audiences in Abidjan and Lagos, linked electronically to Washington by Worldnet, the U.S. Information Agency's satellite television broadcast service.

Lichtman, who teaches history at American University in Washington, quoted liberally from his recent book, "The Keys to the White House," which examines ways to predict presidential elections.

Historically, he said, when American voters look at the president and his party in power they ask themselves: "Is this party worth returning to office? Have they performed well enough to get another four years? Or have they performed so poorly that we want to try somebody new?"

Contrary to what many political pundits believe, Lichtman said, his research indicates that American voters "are not manipulated by the campaigns [party organizers and activists]. Instead, they make their decision based on the [political] record." In short, he explained, elections may be viewed as a referendum on the performance of the party holding the White House.

"Elections turn not on convention speeches or campaigning or advertising, but on the big picture," he said. "Things like how well the economy is doing, what's going on in foreign policy, whether the nation is tranquil at home. And on those scores" the president has done well. But of course, he said, "that could still change" before the November 5 Election Day.



As for the two political conventions held in San Diego and Chicago in August, which more than 6,000 Republican and Democratic party delegates attended, Lichtman said they were "great shows which essentially cancel each other out."

While a necessary and important part of the American political process, the conventions did not really make any decisions or commitments for the candidates, who typically give over the party platform [statement of positions on issues] to the party — then run on their own platform. More extreme measures contained in the platform typically do not find their way into public policy, he said.

The historian stressed again that, "ultimately, this election will not be decided by the media or the campaigns, but by the voters' evaluation of the record of the party in power."

With a conservative trend now sweeping both parties, evidenced by a desire to reduce aspects of the welfare state, a Nigerian wondered if this meant the traditional liberalism of the Democratic party was over.

Lichtman said he didn't believe so. Rather, the Democrats' attitude reminded him of "the founder of the American public school system, Horace Mann, who once said: 'Be ashamed to die until you've won at least one small battle for humanity.'

"The Democrats are saying that government still has battles to win for humanity, maybe not the biggest battles anymore," said Lichtman, "but certainly a lot of small battles in the area of the environment, health care, and even welfare."

The important point to remember, he added, is that "while the new Democrats of Bill Clinton are not the Democrats of Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s or Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s, dreaming dreams of grand government programs to help the American people, they certainly still retain the old Democratic belief that government can be a positive force."

In contrast, the Republicans, according to Lichtman, "have been very consistent ideologically from the 1920s to the present." Basically, they continue to say: "The government is the problem, not the solution to society's problems. Get the government out of the way and simply unleash the spirit of the American people." ❑

Dear Readers,

With this October 1996 issue, due to circumstances beyond our control, Nexus Africa has to say good-bye. We believe that in its short existence Nexus Africa has demonstrated that a lot is happening between the peoples of America and Africa. There is no doubt that this story will continue to be told in many different ways.

The Editors